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REPORT

ON THE

CONDITIONS OF COLOURED LABOUR

ON THE

COCOA PLANTATIONS

OF

S. THOMÉ AND PRINCIPE,

AND THE METHODS OF PROCURING IT

IN ANGOLA.

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M.B., CH.B.

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Methods of Procuring it in Angola.

To Messrs. CADBURY BROTHERS, Ltd.,
Bournville, Birmingham.
J. S. FRY & SONS, Ltd., Bristol.
ROWNTREE & CO., Ltd., York.
STOLLWERCK BROTHERS, Ltd., Cologne.

I have now completed the enquiry undertaken on your instructions into the conditions of coloured labour in the Cocoa Plantations of S. Thomé and Principe, and the methods of procuring that labour in Angola. I propose to deal with the matter in the following order:—

I. General nature and course of the enquiry.
II. The Cocoa Plantations of S. Thomé and Principe.
III. Angola as a recruiting ground for labour.
IV. Indentured labour in other Portuguese Colonies.
V. General Conclusions.

I.—GENERAL NATURE AND COURSE OF THE ENQUIRY.

After some months in Portugal to acquire a knowledge of the language, I left Lisbon for Africa on the 1st of June, 1905. I reached S. Thomé on the 13th June and spent five and a half months there and in Principe, visiting the principal plantations or roças. I stayed altogether at over forty roças and made a careful

study of the condition of the black labourers, known as serviçaes, employed there. Early in December I proceeded to the city of Loanda, the capital of the Portuguese colony of Angola. I then visited Benguella and Mossamedes, and made an excursion into the interior of southern Angola as far us Humpata. While awaiting the arrival of a companion, Dr. W. Claude Horton, who was coming out to assist in the investigation, I took a boat northward, and stayed at Ambrizette and Cabinda. After waiting some weeks in Benguella, Dr. Horton and I proceeded eastward along the great slave route from Katumbella, an old town near the new port of Lobito, to the interior, passing Bailundo, Bihé, Moshico, and reached the Zambesi River, eight hundred miles from the coast. We remained a short time at Kavungo, where the most easterly Portuguese post on the route is situated, and then returned to Bihé. Here we turned northward, and passing Pungo Ndongo, took train at Lucalla for Loanda. This inland journey covered a distance of nearly two thousand miles, and occupied a little over four months. On the 26th of December, 1906, Dr. Horton left Africa for England, and a day or two later I went southward, again visiting Benguella and Mossamedes. From the latter port I took boat to Delagoa Bay. After five weeks spent at Lorenzo Marques and in visiting Johannesburg and Pretoria, I again took boat and returned to Europe, via the Suez Canal. I arrived in England on 13th April, 1907, after an absence of nearly two years.

The work of investigation was greatly facilitated by the general letter of introduction from the cocoa firms, and a letter from Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the British Minister at Lisbon, to the British Consul at Loanda. Beyond this, many of the leading cocoa planters in Lisbon kindly gave me introductions to the managers of plantations in the islands of S. Thomé and Principe.

During my journey I had interviews with the Governors General of Angola and Mozambique; the Governors of S. Thomé, Principe, Cabinda, Benguella and Mossamedes; Lord Selborne, His Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa; Sir Godfrey Y. Lagden, Transvaal Commissioner for Native Affairs; the British Consul-General at Lorenzo Marques; the British Consuls at Loanda and Beira; the Imperial Secretary at Johannesburg; the Secretary for Native Affairs in Barotseland; the Bishop of Lebombo; the Chairman of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association; and officials, medical men, missionaries, traders and many private persons whose circumstances gave them peculiar facilities for acquiring information on native matters. It will be readily understood that much of the information I obtained and have made use of was given by those who were entertaining me as a guest, or was, for some other reason, of a confidential character. I have not, therefore, felt myself at liberty to give in this report the names of many of my informants, or details which would lead to their identity being disclosed.

II.—THE COCOA PLANTATIONS OF S. THOMÉ AND PRINCIPE.

Description of the Islands.

The Island of S. Thomé lies in the Gulf of Guinea, close to the equator, and some 200 miles west of the French Congo. It has an area of 416 square miles, is mountainous and well watered, and with its rich soil and hot, damp atmosphere, is peculiarly suited for tropical agriculture.

Principe is situated about 100 miles north-east of S. Thomé. It has an area of 49 square miles, with a climate and soil similar to S. Thomé, but is less productive than the larger island.

The Cocoa Industry.

Within the last few years these islands have become one of the most productive cocoa growing regions in the world. The Portuguese have shown great enterprise in the development of this colony, and are justly proud of its rapid growth. In 1901 the quantity of cocoa exported from S. Thomé was 277,000 cwt. In 1905 it had risen to 507,000 cwt. The figures for 1906—482,300 cwt.—do not represent any permanent decline in production. Roughly speaking, one-fifth of the world's supply of cocoa comes from the two islands. Large districts have recently been brought into cultivation, but there is still much rich forest land.

Absence of indigenous labour.

The plantations are cultivated by imported black labour. The natives proper will not work, and have a saying, "A native of S. Thomé does not work." The planter is thus obliged to look abroad for help. Some years ago an attempt was made to use Chinese labour, but without success. A recent importation of Indians from the Portuguese colony of Goa has resulted in heavy expenses and much loss of life, and the experiment has now been abandoned.

Present supplies of labour.

The present sources of supply are three—(*a*) Angola, (*b*) The Cape Verde Islands, and (*c*) the Portuguese Colony of Cabinda, north of the Congo. With the labourers imported from the last two localities I do not propose to deal at any length. Their numbers are small compared with those of labourers from Angola. There is no ground for thinking that compulsion is employed in recruiting them, and they are repatriated at the termination of their contracts. The Cabindas work chiefly on the steamboats and as domestic servants. The great majority of the imported labourers come from Angola. The official bulletins show that in the five years 1901-5 some 18,000 of these entered the two islands.

Royal Decree regulating Serviçaes.

The importation of serviçaes and their employment on the islands are now mainly regulated by a Royal Decree of the 29th January, 1903, replacing and supplementing earlier ordinances on the same subject. By this decree a Central Committee of Labour

and Emigration is constituted in Lisbon, consisting of six members, two of whom are officials of the Colonial Office, the remaining four being elected by the proprietors of S. Thomé and Principe resident in Lisbon. The principal work of superintendence is vested in a Local Board of Labour and Emigration, which consists of seven members. Three of them are Government officials, viz., the Curator-General of Serviçaes, the Head of the Health Department, and the Director of Public Works; three are proprietors, managers or factors of rural properties in S. Thomé, chosen by the Central Committee, while the seventh member is the manager of the National Colonial Bank. The duties of this Board are to nominate emigration agents on the mainland, to fix and pay their remuneration, which is to be repaid to the Treasury by the planters in the islands; to decide as to the number of serviçaes required; to allocate them among the different plantations; and to watch over the fulfilment of the terms of the contract, especially those concerning lodgings, food, treatment in sickness, repatriation and renewal of contracts. The emigration agents are to use all means in their power to prevent secret emigration, to exercise the greatest care and vigilance in the identification of natives, and to abstain from employing any violence or fraudulent means to obtain them. Contracts are only to be made before Curators or other Government officials, who are to satisfy themselves that the serviçaes are acting voluntarily, and have been properly identified. The wages of serviçaes are not to be less than 2,500 reis (10/-) per month in the case of men, or 1,800 (7/3) per month in the case of women. Three-fifths of the wages are, however, to be retained by the employer and paid into a repatriation fund. The employer is to provide each serviçal with lodging, food, clothing, and medical attendance. On the serviçal completing his contract he is to be repatriated at the cost of his employer. A Government commissary is to accompany each batch of returning serviçaes, and the amounts retained out of their wages are to be paid to them on board in the presence of the local emigration agent and the commandant of the ship. If a serviçal desires to renew his contract after the five years have expired, he is at liberty to do so, but in that case his wages are to be increased by at least 10 per cent. Female serviçaes are to be relieved of all work during their pregnancy, and for twenty days after being confined. While suckling their children they are only to be employed on light labour. Searches for fugitive serviçaes are to be made on the order of a legal tribunal, or upon a complaint that ten have run away.

Vital Statistics.

The English Blue Book of December, 1902, gives the serviçal population of both islands in November, 1900, as 22,388. This is now much more, but no official figures are obtainable. Some regions of S. Thomé and Principe are salubrious, but the islands, as a whole, are unhealthy. For the purpose of calculating the death rate one is therefore obliged to take the records of each plantation. By the courtesy of the planters I was able to obtain figures showing the number of deaths in 26 roças in S. Thomé,

with an aggregate population of 11,606 adult serviçaes. These show death rates among adults varying from 100 to 5 per thousand, and the total figures show an adult death rate of 44 per thousand. Figures similarly obtained at 11 roças in Principe, having an aggregate adult population of 2,454, show a death rate varying from 200 to 48 per thousand, and a total adult death rate of 110 per thousand. The figures for S. Thomé do not include one large and most unhealthy roça, and I am satisfied that complete figures for the two islands would show a considerably higher death rate. In confirmation of this statement I may say that the Medical Officer of a very populous district in S. Thomé told me that he estimated the adult mortality in that district at over 100 per thousand. To appreciate the significance of these figures it is important to bear in mind that they are those of a population in the prime of life, whose death rate in every country in the world is very much below that of the general death rate. For instance, the death rate of England and Wales for 1905 was 15·2 per thousand, whereas the Registrar General estimates that the deaths of the population between 25 and 45 were 7·53 per thousand. The death rate in Principe is much increased by the prevalence of sleeping sickness, as parts of that island are infested with the tsetse fly. S. Thomé is free from this pest. In both islands the death rate during the first year of acclimatisation is very high and an intelligent and experienced planter estimated it to be one-fifth of the serviçaes imported. At one roça I visited in S. Thomé they had lost 80 out of 150 new-comers. It must be remembered that in many cases the serviçal changes the comparatively healthy climate of the interior for that of an equatorial island, the leisurely indolence of his village for continuous labour, and a diet consisting of almost entirely one article, such as manioc* for a variety of fresh foods. To the African, who lives as his forefathers lived, these changes are in themselves sufficient to produce a high mortality; but, apart from this, the mental distress and hopelessness of a man separated from his family and placed in a strange environment have a highly prejudicial effect upon him.

Nature of Employment.

The employment mainly consists of keeping the ground clear from weeds, gathering and harvesting of cocoa, and putting it up ready for export. There is of course a large amount of miscellaneous consequential employment such as the tending of cattle and the care of horses. Speaking generally, the labour appears to be neither heavy nor arduous. In the early stages of the development of a roça, however, there is much heavy manual labour, including clearing the forests, and the construction of roads and railways. In the larger roças transport is mainly effected by tramway.

Hours of Labour.

The serviçal works about 9 hours a day on week-days and about 5 hours on Sundays.

Cassava-manihot Utilissima, from which Cassava and Tapioca are prepared.

He commences work at 6 a.m. and concludes at 5.30 p.m., with intervals amounting to 2½ hours for rest and meals. After the regular work of the plantation is closed, there are still miscellaneous duties to perform, such as gathering grass and firewood. At 7 p.m. there is generally a nightly parade for inspection. At 9 p.m. the bell is rung for rest, which lasts until 5 a.m.

Diet. The articles of diet in common use are maize-meal, rice, beans, dried fish, American beef in barrels, and a little fresh pork or beef. Palm oil is regularly given, also bananas and other fruit, at many roças. About 2 lbs. of food, not including fruit and oil, is given daily, and appears to be ample.

Housing. The housing of the older roças consists of rows of small wooden sheds, covered with galvanised iron roofs. Recently great improvements have been made, and some of the modern plantations have houses covering 5 metres by 4, with tiled roofs and raised floors.

Care in Sickness. Nearly all the roças have hospitals, with separate wards for men and women, under the charge of European dispensers. A doctor attends periodically, and can be sent for in special cases. At one roça I visited, some £14 was spent on a special visit of the doctor to attend a serviçal. Anæmia, dysentery, pneumonia, fevers, and tetanus (and sleeping sickness in Principe) are among the principal serious diseases. Most of the cases I saw in the hospitals were of a slight character, colds, wounds, ulcers, etc. Many new hospitals are in construction, and there is an advancing standard of efficiency and comfort.

Wages. In addition to food, housing, medicine and clothes, which are commonly given twice a year, the man serviçal from Angola gets a minimum payment of about 4s. a month, and the woman rather less. Many, if they are good servants, receive more, and some few get as much as a £1. Eight shillings a month is a common wage for a man.

Punishments. Fines are a very common form of punishment. Corporal punishment is prohibited by law, but it is nevertheless extensively practised. At times the hand is beaten with a thick, flat, circular piece of wood with a handle, known as a "palmatoria." In more serious cases a strip of hide, known as a "chicotte" is sometimes used, occasionally a thong of thick rubber. The roça system places an almost unlimited power in the hands of the planter. One has but to accompany him in his nightly inspection of the lined-up serviçaes to realise this. The white foremen stand by their gangs of negroes, with their hats in their hands, as he passes by and gives the word which changes the black figures into moving, speaking men and women. It would need almost superhuman courage to defy his authority there. What are laws and royal decrees compared with the proximity of a chicotte? Small as are the islands, many roças, owing to steep mountains and winding paths, are remote from the city, it may be two days' journey, and the serviçal, if he sets out to lodge a complaint with the curator, may be seized before he reaches his destination.

Though convinced of the very common occurrence of corporal punishment in spite of the restrictions of the law, I am sure that on the best estates this is against the wish of the proprietors, and is one of those abuses that repatriation will quickly check. I should also like to state that I have evidence of the fairness of the Government Curator, and know that from time to time he visits the estates, including those in the most distant parts of the Island.

Runaways. Attempts to escape from the roças are common. The printed forms of return generally used in plantations provide a space for stating the number of runaways, and the royal decree of 29th January, 1903, recognises the prevalence of the practice by providing that a search is to be organised by the authorities on a complaint that not less than ten serviçaes have run away. These attempts to get away are, however, usually abortive. Some serviçaes, however, do make good their escape and live in the recesses of the forests and mountains of southern S. Thomé, where they eke out a miserable existence. At Principe it is no uncommon thing for them to steal boats and make for the mainland.

Repatriation. I have detailed the provisions of the royal decree as to repatriation. But in practice no repatriation of the labourer from Angola ever takes place. He never returns to the mainland. Once in S. Thomé or Principe, he remains there till death. On this point all the authorities are unanimous. During my stay in Angola I only heard of one case of repatriation. That the Angolan does not remain in the islands voluntarily is shown by his frequent attempts to escape, and by the fact that the Cape Verde Islanders, and the Cabindas, who are free labourers, almost invariably return to their homes at the termination of their contract of service.

III.—ANGOLA AS A RECRUITING GROUND FOR LABOUR.

I think I can best set out the results of my enquiries on the mainland by speaking of the various places I visited in geographical order.

The Coast Towns.

Loanda. The first town in the interior which I visited was Loanda, the capital of the province. Altogether I stayed about two months there. Whilst there, an incident happened which illustrates how the question of the export of labour to the islands is bound up with the social institutions of Angola. One evening, my servant brought a boy about 10 years old for me to see. His name was Antonio, and he was described to me as the slave of an hotel-keeper, who had bought him for five milreis (£1), and had offered to sell him to my servant. My servant saw the hotel keeper lift the child up by his ears, and throw him to the ground, and he was at times beaten with palmatoria and chicotte. I took him apart and talked quietly with him. He told me his master beat him every day with the palmatoria, and on feeling his palms I found them very hard. His little sister was under the same master. The Portuguese law, of course, does not permit slavery, but this was only one of many instances I found on the mainland in which the labour employed was not voluntary.

Benguella. Benguella is the port whence have been shipped the natives who for years have been pouring down to the coast by the great slave route, whose branches reach far eastward and are fed from the dark regions of the Congo and the far interior. I met there with abundant evidence of the kind of compulsory labour I have referred to. Whilst I was there a boy at an hotel was ordered to beat his own wife, at the time pregnant, and did it.

A man staying at an hotel in the town heard shrieks in one of the great house yards, still used to enclose serviçaes, and common in Benguella, and saw a boy rushing out, bleeding terribly. I myself saw the stains of blood on the road. A man told me he had bought a dozen serviçaes there whom he believed to be free men. I heard afterwards that some of them had run away, and that he was obliged to put the rest of them in irons at night. Strings of serviçaes in clean, gay clothes, and merry with brandy, are constantly seen going down to the boat bound for St. Thomé. A young Englishman told me that he recently saw a man outside the city in charge of a gang of serviçaes coming down from the interior take a rifle and shoot one of them, who was too weak to be of any value.

Mossamedes. Two hundred miles to the south lies the pleasant little town of Mossamedes. Few serviçaes are sent from here, but while I was there a shipment was made. A friend of mine saw them weeping on board. Nearly all the work of the commercial houses and plantations is performed by serviçal labour. The labourer often runs away, but is always caught, for he is surrounded everywhere by men who, though of his own colour, are glad to earn a few milreis by delivering him to his master. He is then handed over to the police, and beaten according to the wish of his master.

Relation of Necessitous Debtors to Labour Recruiting. Ambrizette is a small port a hundred miles north of Loanda. A Portuguese has recently settled in Ambrizette for the purpose of procuring and trading in serviçaes. He employs natives, who go about in the district and worm out the private affairs of the people. When these agents find a quarrel between two natives they bring them before the authorities, and judgment being given, the offender is told he must at once make restitution. Probably the only way in which he can do this is to sell as a serviçal either one of his own domestic servants or someone he has in his power, as a nephew or niece, who, by African custom, are the property of the maternal uncle.

This is exactly what the trader wants. He hands over cloth to the value of a few pounds to the native, who pays his judgment debt with it. The unfortunate subject of the bargain is taken possession of by the white man, and imprisoned in his house. In due course, in company with other unfortunates, he is sent secretly down to the south. Finally, he is forwarded to the emigrating agent at Loanda, and when the affair is well under cover of legality, he is shipped to the island plantations as a native who has entered into a free contract for five years' service.

Disputes among Natives.

The evil practice of raking up old offences, known as "crimes," is common in many parts of Angola. Sometimes the parties actually concerned are dead. The natives are inveterate litigants. A case in which a fowl is concerned may result in a claim for a goat. This may not be settled till such time as the goat might have had kids, and this serves as a base for a furthur claim. The case is taken to the fort, and if the fine imposed is a heavy one, it is generally paid in natives. One such case came before our notice in some detail. A boy, named Ngumba, asked a missionary with whom we were staying what he could do in reference to his wife's cousin, Neyambi, a girl of about 15 years of age, who had been taken as a slave. It seems that an old native, named Saulamba, said that his uncle once loaned some goods to the girl's family. Debtor and creditor were both dead, but on this ancient grievance Saulamba had actually taken Neyambi, an absolutely free girl, and exchanged her for another slave with a Portuguese trader. The exchange benefited both parties; Saulamba got an interior slave instead of a local one who might bring reproaches upon him, and the trader got a young girl. This poor girl, Neyambi, was thus a slave for life, and the mother was breaking her heart over her daughter's misfortune. Had the relatives been rich enough they might have redeemed the girl, but the more anxious were they to do so the higher would be the price. I afterwards received photographs of this girl, her mother, and the village, and heard that she had been redeemed for 40 kilos of rubber, worth about £12. I obtained particulars of an incident which happened at Ambrizette shortly before my arrival there. A native bought a wife for 5,000 rods (about £6). The woman deserted him, and went to another man; not wishing to lose his property, he succeeded in getting her back for a tip of 300 rods, and then sold her for some £5 to the trader at Ambrizette mentioned above, who sent her down to Loanda to be shipped to the plantations.

Smuggling of Serviçaes.

I have good reason to believe that, besides the number sent over by the steamers of the "Empreza Nacional," serviçaes are smuggled into the islands. The unfrequented bays and outlying plantations of S. Thomé and Principe afford facilities which would make the carrying on of this irregular traffic extremely easy, and the profits on a few hundred natives, thus run across, would be very considerable.

Journey to the Interior.

On July 28th, 1906, Dr. Horton and I left Benguella for the interior. A white servant, two Cabinda servants, 50 Quelengue carriers, with a mule and two donkeys, had been sent on towards Katumbella, an old town lying near the end of the route from the interior. On the morning of the 30th our caravan was moving slowly up the bare mountains towards the interior, along paths worn smooth and dusty by bare feet.

Evidence of Compulsion.

It was not long before we found skeletons and shackles. These shackles are blocks of wood, in which an oblong hole is hewn to admit the hands or feet. A stout peg is then driven through the side, dividing the ankles or wrists, and making withdrawal impossible.

They vary in size and shape. I saw some intended for women's hands, with a fork for the neck. A long, heavy pole is sometimes used, and must be a terrible instrument attached to the neck. In the gully of a dry stream bed, where we stayed to rest, a few yards from where we sat, and under the side of an overhanging rock, we saw the decomposing corpse of a man. Hard by lay a small basket, a large wooden spoon, a native mat, and a few filthy clothes. The dead man lay on his back, with his limbs spread out, probably as he had died, left hopelessly weak by a gang going down to the coast. Another skeleton lay within a few yards, making five we had seen in a few hours' march. Most of them, at any rate, must have been serviçaes, as free carriers who die on the route are generally buried by their relatives, some of whom are usually in the caravan.

Bailundo.

On August 14th we reached Bailundo. There has been much improvement in the treatment of natives since the Bailundo war of 1902; I was told, however, that even now it is a common thing for a man's master to send him down to the coast as a serviçal for the islands in punishment of an offence. Needing a fresh hammock pole, I stopped one day at a store on the road, and had some conversation with the manager. He said that if the climate were not deadly, the islands would be filled with the numbers of serviçaes that were sent over, and that the native so dreads the islands from whence none return, that he would not go there to work for 100 milreis (£20) a month,

Bihé.

Bihé was long an important interior centre for the slave traffic. Its inhabitants have been great travellers and slavers, and have carried their language, Umbundo, far and wide along the roads of the interior. They undertake journeys of many months and even years, and have been known to go as far as Lake Ngami, 700 miles to the south-east.

Caravans for the Coast.

One morning I saw a caravan from the Lunda country, 500 miles away, which was passing through Bihé in charge of natives. Interspersed among the Bihéans were lean men with bent knees, who tottered under their loads. The breasts of many of them were covered with light-coloured scars, for, having little clothing, they lie very close to the camp fires, and thus get burnt during the cold nights on these African highlands. I have seen freshly imported serviçaes at Principe in much the same condition as these emaciated carriers. Natives thus brought from the far interior are not necessarily for export. They may be kept as domestic servants, and as such are generally well treated. But their position at best, is an insecure one, for if their masters get into financial difficulties, they are sold to traders, who are eager to buy. This old custom of owning servants is deeply rooted in African life. It plays into the hands of the trader, and is a prolific source of supply for the export traffic.

The Quanza: Further Evidence of Compulsion.

On the first September Dr. Horton and I left Bihé, and on the 6th crossed the Quanza river. We passed large numbers of wooden shackles by the roadside and hanging on trees. Most of them were for hands or feet of a single individual, others were for shackling two or three together. We continued to see shackles for many days along the route. As I walked along I once counted twenty in a few minutes, conclusive evidence of the compulsory nature of serviçal recruiting in the interior. We have at times seen shackles, of various sizes, in heaps. A man, whom we met, recently found corpses still shackled together at a place in the Quanza district, two days' journey from our road. We were prevented from visiting this gruesome record of compulsion.

The Hungry Country.

Two days after crossing the Quanza we entered a district known as the "hungry country," from the fact that there are no villages on the road, and it is impossible to buy meal or any food for the carriers. It is a pleasant, well-watered region, some 150 miles across. We were told that villages were now encroaching on both sides. This part of the route is very trying to carriers with heavy loads. It necessitates taking a large supply of food, and long marches. During the days when large slave caravans passed through it, many of the captives perished here.

One day Dr. Horton noticed a skeleton which had evidently not been there long, and we constantly passed dry bones and shackles. But it was near the Quanza that the shackles were particularly numerous, and the probable reason is, that the captives having been brought so far, and the "hungry country" being between them and their homes, there was little fear of escape and the heavy shackles were flung away.

Near Kavungo.

Compulsory Recruiting in the Far Interior.

On the 4th October we reached Kavungo, or Nana Kandundo, or Nyakatoro, as it is variously called, lying near the Zambesi River. Though the day of large caravans is passed, natives are still purchased north-east of Kavungo, and passed down to the coast. While we were at Kavungo three such caravans arrived on their way westward. We sent a shrewd and reliable native to investigate. He returned after a few days, bringing back a story of cruel injustice. One trader had left with 50 natives, another with 20, and he saw shackles outside one of their houses; at Tchipamba he found a third trader in possession of five serviçaes, three men and two women. The natives, and among them the son of the chief Katendi, complained bitterly of the treatment they had received from the white men, who tied them up and took them for trifling debts of three or four eights of cloth (12/- or 16/), and they desired these things might be reported to the fort. The local chief pointed out the house of a man who had been taken by a trader for a debt of two eights, and something less than a pound of gunpowder. The messenger slept at Kakambwe, on the Luachi river, where he was informed that a trader, of most evil repute, lost three serviçaes, two of whom took refuge

in Katapungo's village. At the trader's request these two were returned to him. He then made Katapungo responsible for the third, whom the villagers denied having seen. The trader then sent armed servants, under a trusty black, named Malange, and they killed Katapungo, the head man of the village, and his brother, and caught five villagers and took them away as serviçaes. The people asked our messenger, Why does not the "commandante" at the fort come and protect us against these traders? This particular trader has been reported to the authorities for dealing in natives, but though some steps were taken against him by the "commandante," he does not appear to have been punished. I was told that this trader once shot a man, and held nine women and children at ransom for cloth he had given; and that he was recently offering, through a native agent at a village near Kavungo, three women at the price of an ox a head; one was already sold. He is said to carry on regular trade with the rebel soldiers of the Congo, giving them oxen, rifles and powder, in exchange for natives.

Congo Raiders.

The region around Kavungo, being near the English and Congo Free State territories, offers special facilities for traffic in natives, as an offender can escape over the border. There are at least six Portuguese trading establishments situated near the Congo border. The usual plan is to employ intelligent blacks as agents for procuring the natives. Instead of themselves raiding for natives, these agents buy them from the rebel soldiers above referred to. These soldiers—the Vallecci or Revoltés—revolted from the service of the Congo Free State more than ten years ago. They are cannibals, living mostly on human flesh, and when a native whom they had sold was asked why they had not eaten him, he replied that he had a companion with him, and that both their arms had been scratched by the Vallecci, and, after tasting the blood, they sold him, and ate his companion. They have been joined by various outlaws and malcontents, and may number 500. The Congo authorities have tried to suppress them, but without success, and they still continue devastating and raiding villages, and supplying slaves to the Portuguese traders. They are well supplied with arms and ammunition. When trading they insist that the weapons they buy shall penetrate a certain thickness of tree, as a proof of driving power; if up to this standard, an arm, with some ammunition, readily purchases 20 natives. A trader living three days' journey from Kavungo, recently bought that number of natives for a small bore rifle.

While at Kavungo we saw an intelligent-looking young man, a son of the chief Kawawe. He stated that he had a young woman and a leopard's skin which he wished to sell for powder. His father, Kawawe, has appealed to the Congo authorities to protect him from the Vallecci, who were then some 120 miles north-east of Kavungo.

Return to the Coast.

Lucalla is on the Loanda railway line, and is a collecting point for serviçaes, who are often sent down to the sea by rail. We took train here and reached the coast on December the 7th, 1906.

The Governor General on the System.

On our return to the coast I again called on the Governor General of Angola, and gave him particulars of our journey to Kavungo. After mentioning some of the cruelties attending the methods of obtaining labour, I added that the present system was injurious to the interests of the Portuguese in Angola. He listened with attention, and thanked me for the information I had given him. He advocated repatriation, and said he thought a better system might be adopted than the present one.

History of Labour Recruiting in Angola.

It may be well at this point to narrate briefly the recent history of labour recruiting in Angola. It divides itself naturally into two periods, namely, that before and that after the Bailundo war of 1902. Before the war large gangs of natives sometimes as many as a thousand, were brought down from the Luba and neighbouring districts, now forming part of the Congo Free State. They suffered incredible torments from hunger, thirst, sickness, and the cruelty of their drivers. A dealer once admitted that if he got six out of every ten natives to Bihé he was lucky, but sometimes only three survived the journey. This was due not only to the physical strain of tramping nearly 700 miles under miserable conditions, but to the fact that the captives were often so hopeless that they refused to eat. Many who were seen to be of no value received a mortal wound, or were left to die of hunger. Cases of incredible cruelty were constantly witnessed. A reliable witness told us that once he was only just in time to save an old woman being killed with an axe. As he was going in the same direction as the caravan he watched over her for some days, then he missed her. She had been left to die in the hungry country. Another time a young girl with sore feet was crying with pain at crossing a river, and when he remonstrated with the man who was beating her the ruffian threatened to kill her. All the unspeakable horrors of slavery, such as our grandfathers heard of, were repeated at the beginning of the twentieth century under a European Government which had abolished the legal status of slavery in all its possessions.

The Bailundo War.

At length, driven to desperation, the natives rose. This was the Bailundo war of 1902. The cause of the war was compulsory recruiting. But the immediate occasion was the treacherous capture of natives, who had been invited to the Bailundo fort by the "capitao mor" to attend a feast and palaver. The war ended as wars between white and black usually end, but it caused great terror among the Portuguese in the Colony. Some of the traders captured were treated with great indignity, one man was kept in chains for forty-two days. Dr. Horton and I lunched with a trader on the road, who said he had lost much property, and many others shared his fate. One trader at Kavungo lost everything and escaped in his shirt.

Captain Amorim's Reforms.

The war woke the authorities from their sleep. They recognised that even the Angolan native had a limit of endurance which could only be passed at grave risk to his white masters. An honest enquiry was made into the abuses. Captain Amorim, of the Artillery passed through the district, liberating natives and punishing offenders. An officer, commanding at Kazenzie, was banished to Mozambique, and some twenty or thirty officials and traders were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Amorim made himself hated by attacking a system in which nearly every trader and many of the officials were interested.

Retrogression.

The effect of the war was, for a time, to check the traffic, but only for a time. Official figures of the serviçaes exported are not now issued—a significant fact, but 1905 bade fair to approach a record of recent years. The influence of Amorim's commission seems passing. A number of natives liberated by him settled near the fort at Kavungo. Some few of them held letters of freedom. About sixteen of them went to settle at Kazombo, eighteen miles to the south of Kavungo. They were known as "Colonials," and lived peacefully thus for two years, sometimes working for the Portuguese officials. Then the "commandante" at the fort sent and captured the greater part of the population of this colonial village, roped up the women, put the men in chains, and sent them on their way to the fort at Moshico, under the charge of a white man and armed coloured soldiers. The colony at Kazombo nearly shared the same fate, but the man sent to take them prematurely stated his errand, and they escaped before he secured them. On our way to Kavungo we met a number of people going towards the coast. We were told they were runaway slaves, and noticed they were in charge of soldiers armed with chicottes, rifles, and ammunition. One man who was seen by one of our party, was tied by his hands and feet, and hung from a pole carried by two men.

Though slaving does not flaunt itself before the eyes of the traveller in Angola as formerly, one has but to travel on the slow boats of the "Empreza Nacional" to see the large numbers of serviçaes leaving Angola. These boats run monthly, and carry them over by hundreds. They may be seen listlessly lying about the deck, dressed in the cheap new clothes that they have received. Some have been sold by white masters for faults, others have been picked up one by one by traders, and sent down to the coast with rubber; some may have been brought down in gangs, by roads which avoided the forts. One boat I was on had three natives of the Quelingue tribe, who had been caught at night in Benguella. The sources may be small but they are many, and the stream of black labour flows steadily westward. I have seen many go but none return, though I have heard of one who was repatriated.

IV.—INDENTURED LABOUR IN OTHER PORTUGUESE COLONIES.

Mozambique.

After finishing the investigation in the islands of S. Thomé and Principe and on the mainland, it seemed well to visit the Portuguese colony of Mozambique on the eastern coast, in order to widen my knowledge of the conditions of coloured labour in Africa, and to acquaint myself with the system adopted in that colony. For this purpose I spent a fortnight at Lorenzo Marques, and was struck by the conditions of labour there obtaining, as contrasted with that on the west coast. Not only were the natives eager to volunteer for work in the Transvaal mines, but I saw them returning to their homes when the period of work for which they had been indentured had expired. From all sides I heard of the free and contented lot of the native in that colony. This was confirmed by further enquiries which I made during a stay of three weeks in the Transvaal.

The Governor General of Mozambique, to whose kindness I am indebted for much information on native labour, expressed it as his opinion that the methods adopted in Angola were detrimental to the best interests of the colony, and this seems to be the opinion of many other Portuguese.

Cabinda.

I visited Cabinda and, from information gathered there and from considerable knowledge of Cabindas in the islands and on the mainland, I am satisfied that, speaking generally, they enter voluntarily into the contract and are duly repatriated.

V.—GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

I must now attempt to sum up the result of my enquiries. It is important at the outset to differentiate between the system of serviçal labour laid down in royal decrees and the system as it exists in actual working. Of the former I have no complaint to make. It provides for the establishment of official machinery which, if actually set up and honestly worked, would make any grave abuses impossible. But the machinery contemplated has not been brought into being, and the most serious evils, which it was to have prevented, flourish unchecked. The law embodies the well-accepted principle that, in order to prevent a system of exported labour from degenerating into slavery, two essentials must be secured, freedom in entering into the contract, and opportunity of repatriation when it is ended. After very careful study of the evidence on the spot I am absolutely satisfied that neither of these is in practice obtained in the case of the labourers imported from Angola.

Of the compulsory character of the enlistment there can be no doubt. The labourers sent to the two islands go there against their will. There is no reason why the natives of the interior should wish to leave Angola. No offer of payment would induce them to separate themselves from their homes and families to work, without hope of return, on the plantations of S. Thomé and Principe. They have not the education nor ambition of the more civilised Cabinda boy, nor are they driven by hunger as are the natives of Cape Verde.

It is indisputable that great numbers of them are brought as captives hundreds of miles from the interior, and that shackles are very extensively used to restrain them, at any rate at night. It is also indisputable that they are the subjects of a commercial transaction, which, whether it be more accurately described as commission or as sale, puts a large profit into the pockets of those who engage in it. Moreover, the amount paid by the planters, from twenty-five to forty pounds a head, for the serviçaes on arrival at the islands is considerably in excess of any legitimate expenses of transit and procuration.

With regard to repatriation, it is sufficient to say that, though it is clearly provided for by law, in practice it does not exist, and no attempt is made to secure it. I found no evidence that a local committee of Labour and Emigration had ever been formed at S. Thomé, or that any repatriation fund had ever been set up.

I have refrained in detailing my enquiries from referring to the serviçaes as slaves or to the serviçal system as slavery, because, approaching the matter as I did with an open mind, I have wished to avoid question-begging epithets.

But now that I have to state my conclusions, I must use the words which most nearly pourtray actual facts. I am satisfied that under the serviçal system as it exists at present thousands of black men and women are, against their will, and often under circumstances of great cruelty, taken away every year from their homes and transported across the sea to work on unhealthy islands, from which they never return. If this is not slavery, I know of no word in the English language which correctly characterises it.

JOSEPH BURTT.

LONDON,

4th July, 1907.

I accompanied Joseph Burtt in the whole of his inland journey in Angola in 1906, *extending over a period of over four months, and as far as my experience goes I can entirely endorse his report, believing that his statements and figures are in no case in excess of fact. I have not visited the Cocoa Plantations in S. Thomé and Principe, but I have seen conclusive evidence that the recruiting of labour in Angola is part of a system of slavery.*

W. CLAUDE HORTON, M.B., Ch.B.,
Children's Hospital,
Brighton.

4th July, 1907.

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